A Word From Tim Downs - September

Dear Friends,

"Engaged with SEC"

My two months of sabbatical is quickly fading as I begin to visit you in your churches, work with search committees, engage the fall meeting and program calendar of the Conference and Associations. However I am deeply grateful for the sabbatical that was truly a time of rest and restoration. The reading and reflection with which I was engaged focused on some rummaging around in John Calvin, reading concerning the emergent church, and thinking about the future shape of our beloved United Church of Christ, and the role of a conference in equipping the local church for a dynamic, if somewhat uncertain future.

There is no doubt in my mind that mainline denominationalism is going through a time of tremendous change. We will not look like we now do in twenty-five years. Many of our churches will be either changed or gone, and we have already seen the signs of this ground swell. Phyllis Tickle compares this time to the Reformation in terms of its impact on the church, and suggests that the church goes through a "rummage sale" every five hundred years, and we are in the middle of such a time. The last "rummage sale" was the Reformation to which we trace our historical roots in the United Church of Christ. The church that is taking shape she calls "the emergent church". The question to us in the Southeast Conference is "how do we rise to the challenge of this emergent season, and equip our congregations for living in these times fully and faithfully, and I would add, without fear?"

I believe that this conference is uniquely gifted to be a vital and dynamic partner in shaping the way in which the UCC is living into its future. Our staff in already engaged in conversations about how to attract and shape the kind of leadership that will be required for "the living of these days". It is clear to me that we will continue to build partnerships not only across the United States, but globally as well in this work. It is further clear that we will strengthen our online capacities to communicate, to teach, and to meet. We have set a goal of building our conference at a rate of 10% a year in growth in numbers of congregations, a goal that is ambitious, but I believe attainable.

I want to add my thanks to a gifted staff and leadership which was in place during my sabbatical time, and who took great measures to protect me from interruptions. And for the curious, who want to know how many miles I bicycled over the course of the summer, it was, 500 miles… a good beginning.

Thanks to each of you lay leaders and pastors for your hard work to build our ministries.

Peace,

TRANSFORMING CHURCHES, TRANSFORMING LIVES
Southeast Conference UNITED CHURCH of CHRIST

Lifting Up. . . September

Please pray with and for the twelve people from across the **Southeast Conference** who are preparing for the **TAP/GTE Cultural Immersion** experience in Washington, D.C. on October 10th - 16th. They will engage in contextual biblical study, theological reflection, and social engagement in the heart of the American empire.

UCC News

UCC Newsroom
Headlines from the United Church of Christ

All-staff day helps UCC national offices staff find new ways to collaborate

More than 100 national staff members from Cleveland and other U.S. locations gathered today at the UCC's national headquarters for worship, breakout discussions and report-backs relating to the tasks and transitions involved in their work.

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- Conference News - September
- A Word From Tim Downs - September
- Lifting Up. . . September
- Celebrations - September

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- Southeast Conference Campaign
- SEC 2010 Annual Meeting

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- **How Do I Find a UCC Church?**
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- Bridge 4 Faith
- The Center for Progressive Renewal
- United Church of Christ
- Mission Insite
- Resource Center

EVENTS CALENDAR

« < October 2010 > »

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
26	**27**	**28**	**29**	**30**	1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**

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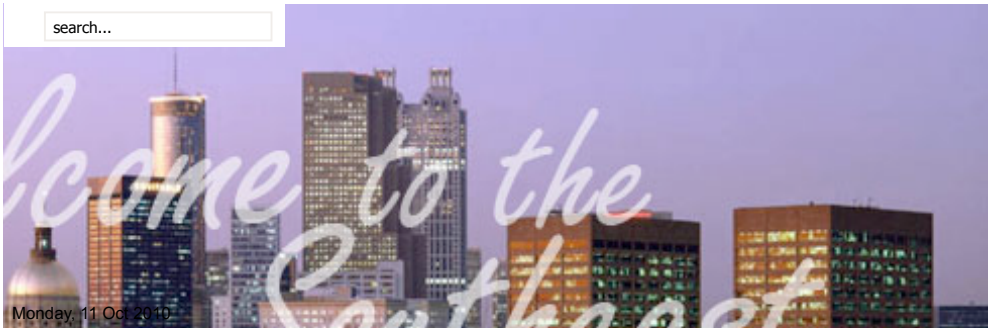

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Celebrations - September

> **Michelle Calderon,** a member of **Central Congregational UCC,** and a chaplain at Grady Hospital in Atlanta, has been recommended to an ecclesiastical council for consideration for ordination.

> **Southern Region Conference Ministers Gather for Annual Meeting at the Franklinton Center in Whitaker, NC**
The annual gathering of the Southern Regional Conference Ministers of the UCC took place at the Franklinton Center on September 13-14. The Conference Ministers of the Southern, Southeast, Florida, and South Central Conferences met with the General Mister and President Geoffrey Black and his staff.

Each conference had an opportunity to report on its current activities and priorities, and together they reviewed the work that they do together. They welcomed Vertie Powers, who is serving ¼ time as conference minister of the Southern Conference as it prepares for a search for a new conference minister. The Florida Conference will serve as the host of the 28th General Synod of the UCC in 2011, and reported on their progress. The South Central Conference hosted the Regional Youth Event in New Orleans this summer. There were strong delegations from Florida and South Central, and 8-9 youth form the Southeast. The conferences are exploring ways in which they can collaborate more fully in support of the ministries of the United Church of Christ.

> **Community Congregational UCC** has called **Rev. Paul A. Gourdine** to serve as pastor. A graduate of ITC Gammon Seminary in Atlanta, and ordained by the United Methodist Church, Rev. Gourdine last serve Dexter Avenue UMC in Montgomery. Deeply involved in community ministries around Montgomery, Rev. Gourdine bring a new and vital spirit to the ministries of the church.
Link to Community Congregational UCC's web site.

> On September 19th, **Howard Congregational UCC, Nashville,** celebrated the ordination and installation of their pastor **Christophe Ringer.** Christophe has served them as a licensed minister while completing seminary and pursuing a PhD at Vanderbilt Divinity School. Participating in the service and representing the Association and conference were Barbara Everett and Tim Downs. Each of the Nashville UCC congregations were represented; Brookmeade Congregational UCC, First United UCC, and Holy Trinity Community UCC. Also present were representatives from Pleasant Hill Community UCC. Christophe is pictured on left with his wife Kimberly Peeler Ringer.

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Steps to Planting a New Church News Contact Us Donate

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Sandy Creek UCC *provided by* Wayde Washburn

Being such a small congregation in the rural area of East Alabama, some would wonder how we can pledge toward the *Transforming Churches – Transforming Lives* Campaign. We borrow our worship space from the Southeast Conference (Allen Retreat Center), our pastor is volunteering, and we are several miles from the nearest traffic light. Yet—we belong.

Sandy Creek UCC believes that we are all a part of God's family. *No matter who you are, or where you are on life's journey…* The *Transforming Churches – Transforming Lives* Campaign emphasizes our belonging. The three goals of the campaign, *Building Covenant and Connection, Building Leaders and Building Congregations,* will, we believe, assist and encourage us in our feeling like WE belong. We also believe that by our pledging toward the campaign, we may help others feel like THEY belong!

Now, we are not only *5 for 5*, but *5 for 5 plus 1*!

TRANSFORMING CHURCHES, TRANSFORMING LIVES
Southeast Conference UNITED CHURCH of CHRIST

Eight weeks until Thanksgiving!
Eight weeks remain untill the culmination and celebration of the pledging phase of theTransforming Churches - Transforming Lives campaign. Has your church, your congregation made it's commitment yet? If not, it's time to do so! If you already have, thank you.

With 2010 coming to a close, we are fervantly trying to wrap up the campaign pledge phase. What do you or your church need to do? Here are two easy steps.....

1. **Establish a pledge goal.** $1.00 per week per member for 5 years, is a minimum goal. $1.50 per week per member or $2.00 per week per member are the intermediate and challenge goals for the conference. It's whatever goal seems to fit best for your congregation.
Link here to read a few words from a member of Sandy Creek UCC.

2. **Send your Declaration of Commitment Form** to Debbie Spearman at the conference office asap. Or just send Debbie an email and she can help you with your pledge commitment paperwork.

> 12 SECUCC Churches <

Athens, AL | **Trinity Congregational UCC**
Birmingham, AL | **First Congregaional UCC**
Atlanta, GA | **Central Congregational UCC**
Columbia, SC | **Garden of Grace UCC**
Deer Lodge, TN | **Congregational UCC**
Knoxville, TN | **Church of the Savior UCC**
Montgomery, AL | **First Congregational UCC**
Clemson, SC | **Peace Congregational UCC**
LaFayette, GA | **Sandy Creek UCC**
Talladega, AL | **First Congregational UCC**
Thomasville, GA | **Bethany Congregational UCC**
Tougaloo, MS | **Union UCC**

What do these 12 churches all have in common?

Oldest in the SEC? No.....! New ministers? No.....!

These 12 churches have all voted and made their commitment to the Transforming Churches-Transforming Lives campaign. In October and November, members of the campaign Steering Commitee will be travel the roads of the Southeast Conference to visit these churches (and others who pledge in the next 8 weeks) to say "THANK YOU".

Let's add your congregation's name to the travel list!!